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ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy is defined as the belief that one can successfully perform a behavior. Self-efficacy theory asserts that self-efficacy expectancies exert powerful influence on behavior and behavior change. The Self-efficacy Scale, which was developed to assess generalized self-efficacy expectations, consists of two subscales: general self-efficacy and social self-efficacy. To provide further evidence of the construct validity of the Self-efficacy Scale and to investigate the relationships between the Self-efficacy subscales and other personality measures, i.e., the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule, and the Bem Sex Role Inventory, introductory psychology students (N=101) completed all four measures. Analyses of results showed that high scorers on the General Self-efficacy Subscale exhibited better adjustment, as measured by the D, Pt, and Si scales of the MMPI, than low scorers. Higher scores on both subscales were associated with increases in assertiveness and masculinity as measured by the Rathus schedule and the Bem inventory. The results support the interpretation of the Self-efficacy Scale as a measure of expectancies of personal ability to initiate and persist in the performance of behaviors. Positive self-efficacy expectancies contribute to enhanced personal adjustment. The General Self-efficacy Subscale appears to be more useful than the Social Self-efficacy Subscale. (Author/WAS)

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The Self-efficacy Scale:
A Construct Validity Study

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Abstract

Self-efficacy theory asserts that self-efficacy expectancies exert powerful influences on behavior and behavior change. The Self-efficacy Scale was developed to assess generalized self-efficacy expectations. Previous research provided preliminary evidence of the validity and reliability of the two subscales of the Self-efficacy Scale. The present study investigated several predicted conceptual relationships between the Self-efficacy subscales and other personality measures (i.e., MMPI, Rathus Assertiveness Schedule, and Bem Sex Role Inventory). Results supported the interpretation of the Self-efficacy Scale as a measure of expectancies of personal ability to initiate and persist in the performance of behaviors. Positive self-efficacy expectancies contribute to enhanced personal adjustment.

The Self-efficacy Scale:

A Construct Validity Study

Self-efficacy is defined as the belief that one can successfully perform a behavior (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's self-efficacy theory asserts that all psychological treatments facilitate behavior change by creating and strengthening expectations of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy theory states that self-efficacy expectations are influenced by past experience and by one's attribution of success to chance or skill (Bandura, 1977). From these propositions it may be concluded that individuals differ in their general self-efficacy expectancies and that these differences have behavioral correlates. The Self-efficacy Scale (Sherer, Maddux, Mercadante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, and Rogers, 1982) was developed to assess these general self-efficacy expectancies.

The self-efficacy Scale has two subscales, the General Self-efficacy Subscale and the Social Self-efficacy Subscale. Sherer et al. found that both subscales have adequate reliability (Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients = .86 and .71, respectively).

Sherer et al. found that the General Self-efficacy Subscale predicted past success in vocational, educational, and military areas. The Social Self-efficacy Subscale predicted past vocational success.

Sherer et al. demonstrated the construct validity of the Self-efficacy Scale by confirming several predicted conceptual relationships between the Self-efficacy Subscales and other personality measures. These measures included Locus of Control, Personal Control, Social Desirability, Ego Strength, Interpersonal Competence, and Self-esteem.

The purpose of the present study was to provide further evidence of the construct validity of the Self-efficacy Scale. Scores on the Self-efficacy subscales were correlated with scores on the three validity and 10 clinical scales of the MMPI, the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (Rathus, 1973), and the Masculinity and Femininity scores from the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). Specific predictions were made for three of the MMPI clinical scales (D, Pt, and Si). Adams and Sherer (1982) found these three scales to be most sensitive to differences in individual adjustment in college students. It was expected that scores on the D, Pt, and Si scales would show moderate negative correlations with self-efficacy. This prediction is supported by the Sherer et al. finding that the Self-efficacy Scale predicts general adjustment as measured by the Interpersonal Competency Scale (Holland and Baird, 1968) and the Ego Strength Scale (Baron, 1953).

The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (Rathus, 1973) assesses individuals' willingness to take initiative in social situations. The Masculinity scale of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) measures more aggressive characteristics as compared to the Femininity scale. Scores on the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule and the Masculinity scale were hypothesized to show a moderate positive correlation with scores on the Self-efficacy Scale. This hypothesis is consistent with the conceptualization of self-efficacy as a willingness to initiate and persist in behavior.

Method

Subjects

Research participants were 101 students, 45 males and 56 females, from introductory psychology classes.

Procedure

The subjects completed the Self-efficacy Scale, the MMPI, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), and the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (Rathus, 1973). The version of the Self-efficacy Scale used is modified slightly from the original version. Items are rated on 5-point scales rather than the 14-point scales used by Sherer et al. (1982). This modification makes the Self-efficacy Scale easier to score. Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, and Rogers (Note 1) demonstrated that the 5-point scales produce results comparable to those produced by the 14-point scales.

Results and Discussion

The 101 subjects obtained a mean score of 64.31 on the General Self-efficacy Subscale; $SD = 8.58$. The mean for the Social Self-efficacy Subscale was 21.20; $SD = 3.63$. The correlations between the Self-efficacy Subscales and the other personality measures are presented in Table 1. The hypotheses were supported

Insert Table 1 about here

thus providing support for the construct validity of the Self-efficacy Scale.

As predicted, high scorers on the General Self-efficacy Subscale exhibited better adjustment, as measured by the D, Pt, and Si scales of the MMPI, than low scorers. The General Self-efficacy Subscales was also significantly correlated with the F, K, Hs, Sc, and Ma Scales. Moderate scores on the K scale are indicative of positive self-evaluation (Graham, 1977). The positive relationship between the General Self-efficacy Subscale and the K scale indicates that high scorers on the General Self-efficacy Subscale have a more positive

self-evaluation than low scorers. This finding is consistent with the Sherer et al. finding that self-efficacy is associated with self-esteem. The correlations of General Self-efficacy with the F, Hs, Sc, and Ma scales are relatively small and more difficult to interpret. Since these relationships were not predicted, additional research is needed to confirm their importance.

The Social Self-efficacy Subscale was significantly correlated with the Ma and Si scales. The relationship of Social Self-efficacy with the Si scale is consistent with the conceptualization of Social Self-efficacy as a willingness to initiate behavior in social situations. Again the relationship with Ma is small and was unpredicted. Additional research is needed to investigate this relationship.

As predicted, high scores on General and Social Self-efficacy are associated with increases in assertiveness and Masculinity as measured by the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule and the Bem Sex Role Inventory, respectively. Self-efficacy is not synonymous with assertiveness or Masculinity, but positive self-efficacy expectancies are important to self-directed behavior. The small correlation of the General Self-efficacy Subscale with the Femininity Scale will not be interpreted at this time, but it may warrant further investigation.

These results add to the data supporting construct validity for the Self-efficacy Scale. In agreement with Sherer et al., it appears that the General Self-efficacy Subscale is more useful than the Social Self-efficacy Subscale. The Self-efficacy Scale is a useful research tool. Additional criterion validity studies are needed to investigate the clinical utility of the Self-efficacy Scale.

Reference Note

1. Prentice-Dunn, S., Jacobs, B., & Rogers, R. W. A Factor Analytic Study of the Self-efficacy Scale. Unpublished manuscript, University of Alabama, 1982.

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Table 1

Correlations of Scores on Self-efficacy Subscales and
Measures of Personality Characteristics
for the Combined Sample (n=101)

Personality Characteristics	r. Self-efficacy	
	General	Social
MMPI: L	.12	.08
F	-.24*	.17
K	.32**	.10
Hs	-.20*	-.04
D	-.32**	-.16
Hy	-.13	.12
Pd	.03	.11
Mf	.02	-.07
Pa	-.10	.13
Pt	-.35**	.01
Sc	-.20*	.07
Ma	.20*	.27**
Si	-.44**	-.51**
Rathus Assertiveness	.41**	.40**
BSRI: Masculinity	.54**	.38**
Femininity	-.19*	.06

*p < .05.

**p < .01.